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Karl Marx as labor defender, 1848-1871

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**A·CZOBEL
C·KAHN**

KARL MARX

AS



LABOR DEFENDER

**1848
•
1871**

KARL MARX AS LABOR DEFENDER (1848-1871)

By A. CZOBEL and C. KAHN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART ONE—Karl Marx as the Organizer of Relief to the Victims of the Counter-Revolution of 1848—by A. Czobel.

Marx, an active participator in two revolutions.
Marx in London after the defeat of the 1848 revolution.
Committee for support of the political emigrants in London.
Marx's Committee and the "Democratic" saboteurs.
Exposure of the slanderers.
New methods of relief.
The end of the relief committee.
The Communist trial at Cologne.

PART TWO—Karl Marx as the organizer of relief to the victims of the Versailles Terror—by C. Kahn.

The Paris Commune—the first attempt to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.
Tasks of the International in connection with the downfall of the Paris Commune.
Struggle against the handing over of emigrants of the Commune to the Versailles government.
Exposure of the criminal activities of members of the Versailles government and of other enemies of the Commune and the Communards.
Organizing the defense of the Communards in the Versailles trials.
Serious financial situation of the General Council of the International and the organization of material relief to the emigrants of the Commune.
Collection of funds for the emigrants of the Commune.
Organization of the Flight of the Fugitives from France.
Distribution of the collected funds to the emigrants and the finding of work for them.
Conclusions.

PREFACE

The lessons of the Paris Commune have become an invaluable guide for workers the world over. They contain one lesson of special importance to the members of the International Labor Defense and all workers interested in the struggle against terror, the struggle for the defense of our fundamental rights. This lesson now comes to us in a form that has been strangely neglected. It comes to us in the form of the activities of Karl Marx—*defense* activities organized and formulated by one of the greatest revolutionary leaders of all time.

These daily "Jimmie Higgins" activities of Karl Marx, arranging for defense of political prisoners, arranging refuges for the politically persecuted, providing relief for those who were fortunate enough to escape from the reactionary butchers of Versailles, have become lost in our general picture of Marx as the analyst of capitalist society and the theoretician of the working class, the Father of Scientific Socialism and the great strategist of the class struggle. The methods used by Marx in his "Labor Defense" work are of great value for us today. Under his leadership the task of aiding political prisoners and emigrants became one of the most important means for political education and strengthening the revolutionary working class movement of his times.

Karl Marx lived through the period of our own Civil War. His analysis of the class character of this struggle which appeared in a series of articles in the *New York Tribune* of the late 50's and early 60's of the last century is the greatest analysis of the Civil War that has ever been written. He showed the course to be followed by the workers of America if they were ever to emancipate themselves. He clearly saw during the period of struggle the necessity for unity of Negro and white workers. He said then, "LABOR IN THE WHITE SKIN CANNOT EMANCIPATE ITSELF WHILE LABOR IN THE BLACK SKIN IS ENSLAVED."

Without the unity of Negro and white workers there can be no

successful defense struggles for the working class of America. It is with the clear understanding of this that the International Labor Defense brings forward the demand for full social, economic and political equality for the Negro masses. With this demand it smashes the walls of capitalist prejudice and unites the working class in irresistible defense struggles.

The methods developed by Marx in the defense of the revolutionists of 1848 and the Paris Communards are not time worn. They lay the basis for our present day defense struggles—in the Scottsboro case, the case of Angelo Herndon, in our struggle for the release of Tom Mooney and all other class war prisoners.

Today, when the unprecedented robbery of the working class, the looting of the banks, the closing of factories, mines and mills, has placed on the order of the day for the working class the question of starvation or relentless struggle, the lessons of the Paris Commune and the "labor defense work" of Karl Marx become more valuable than ever before. For the members of the International Labor Defense these colossal struggles give birth to a multiplicity of tasks—the defense of workers in the courts of the ruling class, the mass struggle in the streets where the courts of the working class passes decisions forced upon the oppressors—these are unfolding themselves before our eyes.

It is for us to learn from yesterday's revolutionary strategy and tactics. To fit these to the changed and changing circumstances of today and to mold an irresistible organization of working class defense.

It is fitting for the International Labor Defense to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the death of Karl Marx with this, until now, neglected page from his life and present to the working class this pamphlet which becomes a guide book of invaluable character.

National Educational Committee

INTERNATIONAL LABOR DEFENSE



PART ONE.

**KARL MARX AS THE ORGANIZER
OF RELIEF TO THE VICTIMS OF
THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION OF
1848—BY A. CZOBEL.**

Marx an Active Participant in Two Revolutions.

Karl Marx, the founder of scientific socialism and the herald of the victory of the proletariat, actively participated in two revolutions. His first revolution was in 1848-9 when he fought in the front ranks on one of the decisive sectors of the German revolution—at Cologne. His second was the Paris Commune, which he supported from abroad—from London. Both these uprisings ended in defeat. The victims of the triumphant counter-revolutions were numbered in the thousands while tens of thousands fled abroad to escape the vengeance of the counter-revolutionary executioners. As a result there developed a considerable political emigration to many countries which had not been reached by the wave of revolution.

During both these revolutions Marx was himself forced to leave Germany as a political emigrant and to go to London where he was most active in rendering material and moral aid to the political emigrants. Particularly interesting is the revelation which historical records—little known and having received but little notice from historians—give of the “labor defense” activities of Marx. Activists in the labor defense movement will discover that Karl Marx, the author together with Frederick Engels of the Communist Manifesto, the author of “Capital” and the great genius who led the proletarian class struggle, was at the time occupied with the task of aiding the victims of bourgeois “justice” and white terror.

The methods Karl Marx applied to his “labor defense” work are of the greatest value even now despite the enormous differences in the concrete historical circumstances of his epoch and our own. To Marx—as for us at the present time—*“labor defense” activities were not a philanthropic but a political work.* Under his leadership the task of aiding the political emigrants became one

of the most important means of political education and a most effective method of strengthening the revolutionary proletarian organizations of that time.

Marx in London After the Defeat of the 1848 Revolution

Marx arrived in London at the end of August, 1849, after the bloody suppression of the uprising in Pfalz which concluded the final phase of the revolution of 1848. White terror ruled Germany. The victory of the feudal-monarchist counter-revolution did not, however, bring about "stability". The masses were deeply agitated throughout Europe. The fury of the victorious troops and the outrages perpetrated by the bureaucracy which had been restored to all its previous power brought a "justice" which, combined with the continuation of the economic crisis, inflamed the masses of the petty-bourgeoisie, the peasants and still more the workers with bitter indignation. Moreover, big international conflicts were developing. The rivalry between Austria and Prussia threatened to break out into war. The whole international situation as well as the internal conditions of Prussia made possible a new upsurge of the revolutionary wave.

In the first year of his exile in London Marx also looked forward to a new revolutionary outburst in the near future. He considered the sharpening and activization of class antagonisms as the real revolutionary achievements of the movement of 1848-9. He foresaw that under conditions in which there is a strengthening of the counter-revolutionary system a genuinely revolutionary proletarian Communist party matures under its pressure and in struggle with it. Having thus matured, this party wins for itself the leadership of the revolutionary movement of the broad masses in city and village. He looked upon the temporary triumph of the counter-revolution as a factor not of stabilization but of revolutionization, while the policy of the counter-revolutionary government was, in his opinion, merely fanning the flames of the revolution.

Marx considered that Germany was on the eve of a new revolution. This revolution, however, as he conceived it, would not be initiated, as in March, 1848, under the leadership of the liberal big bourgeoisie which, frightened by the movement of the prole-

tariat, had at once united with the feudal-landlord-monarchist counter-revolution. He thought that the new revolution would bring into power the democratic petty-bourgeoisie which would overthrow the whole of the old feudal order but would after this victory immediately attempt to crush the proletariat. Marx considered therefore that the direct and main tasks of the Communist party were not the mobilizing of the proletariat for the support of the democratic movement as in 1848 but, instead, that of preparing the proletariat for the struggle against the ruling power of the near future—the petty-bourgeois democracy; thus laying the basis for the transformation of the approaching democratic revolution into the proletarian revolution.

The prerequisite in this preparation would have to be the re-establishment of the Communist party organization, of this vanguard of the proletariat. Under its leadership the new proletarian movement would have to free itself ideologically and organizationally from all petty-bourgeois democratic influences. The proletariat must not, as in 1848-9, trail along behind the petty-bourgeoisie. It must refuse all union with bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties, for they strive to subject to their influence the working class and its various legal organizations, educational, sport, and singing societies. The party of the proletariat must come forward as an independent, self-contained organization, and, wherever possible, under its own Communist banner.

The struggle against petty-bourgeois democracy, the struggle for hegemony in the coming revolutionary peoples' movement, and the building up of an independent workers' party—these were the slogans which Marx put forward.

Engels followed him to London shortly after, resuming in the fall of 1849, the work of publicity and organization.

Immediately on his arrival in London at the end of August, 1849, Marx reestablished the central organization of the Communist League and was elected as chairman. The Communist League—the first revolutionary proletarian party in the world—had been established by Marx in 1847. In its name there was issued in that same year the Communist Manifesto, wherein the basic teachings of Marx concerning the class struggle and revolution are given. Through this central organization he led the Ger-

man Workers' Educational Society of London. This society had been founded in 1840. In 1847 it had passed into the leadership of the Communist League. By 1849 it had a membership of several hundred German workers, some of whom had lived a long time in London, while the rest were emigrants who had arrived in London after the revolution. This workers' society became the London "mass" organization of the Communist League.

Under the leadership of Marx groups of the Communist League were established in many cities in Germany. These either collapsed or were destroyed during the triumph of the counter-revolution. But letters and circulars of the Communist League were secretly circulated in Germany. In London an international revolutionary celebration was organized. Marx himself delivered a report at the German Workers' Club. He got out a journal of political science in German which was the party organ. In spite of great difficulties four numbers had appeared by May, 1850. There had also been a broad development by this time of the "labor defense" activities of Marx.

Committee for Support of the Political Emigrants in London

On September 18, 1849, there was held in London a general meeting of the members of the German Workers' Society together with the German emigrants. The meeting elected a committee to take charge of relief work for German political emigrants. Three of the five members of this committee were also members of the Central Committee of the Communist League. These were Heinrich Bauer, a shoemaker, Karl Pfender, a painter, and Marx himself. On the following day this committee issued an appeal and a contribution list. This appeal was sent to Germany and published in a number of papers there.

The appeal, signed by all members of the committee including Marx, was as follows:

"Since the time in Germany when savage debauchery by the troops reestablished "peace and order"; since the time when in the ashes of smoking cities and under the deadly roar of cannon there was being reestablished the "sanctity of person and property"; since the time when there were hardly military courts enough to send to their graves or to behead one "rebel" after another; since that time thousands and thousands wan-

der about in strange countries without a roof over their heads. Every day the number of these increases. Every day the misery of these homeless ones grows. Driven about from place to place, they do not know in the morning where they can find shelter in the evening nor do they know in the evening where they can get a crust of bread for the next morning. Those who fought on the barricades in Vienna; those who fought in the ranks at Elacheuh; those from Prussia who fled from the troops of Brandenburg and Wrangel; those from Dresden who defended the constitution with guns in their hands; those from Baden who fell as republican soldiers before the savage united forces of the reigning princes; these adherents of the most varied political views—liberals and democrats, republicans and socialists—are all united in the same banishment and the same poverty.

"Even here in London our fellow-countrymen wander about the cold streets of this glittering world metropolis. Every ship brings new crowds of homeless from over there. On all the streets of this city the distress of the exiled calls to us."

Then follows the account of the election of the committee of the emigrants.

"The committee will make an official report each month at the general meetings as well as in the press, especially in the German papers. In order to avoid misunderstandings the rule has been established that no member of the committee has the right to receive relief in any form from its treasury. If any member of the committee should himself need aid, he must first resign from the committee. We urge you, friends and brothers, to do all in your power to help. If the restoration of that freedom which is now shackled and trampled on is dear to you, it may make you sympathize with the sufferings of your best fighters—it is unnecessary to remind you of your duty. . . ."

It is notable that this appeal, which gives such a moving description of the conditions of the emigrants, speaks about the protection of the interests of *all political emigrants regardless of their political convictions*. Marx in this way furnished an example of the tactic of the united-front from below. The ferocious violence of the counter-revolution compelled not only the revolutionary fighters to flee but even those who had simply dared to criticize the monarchy or even the outrages perpetrated by its bureaucracy. Among the emigrants were therefore representatives of all sorts of political currents and standpoints. It was in the interest of the revolution to show that the Communist League

defended especially energetically the interests of all the exiled, and thus by this policy attracting to the real revolutionary body all those proletarians who up to the time of their exile had not yet succeeded in becoming revolutionists or who were still under the leadership of various petty-bourgeois democratic organizations.

Marx's Committee and the "Democratic" Sabotagers

The London leaders of the democratic party—Gentzen, Struve, Ruge, Schramm and other quite notorious chatterboxes of that time—former members of dissolved parliaments—instantly recognized the great political significance of Marx's organization of relief for the emigrants. Several weeks after Marx had formed this relief committee, they created through their joint efforts a committee of their own which forthwith circulated rumors in London and Germany that the committee organized by Marx was supporting only Communists. Marx replied to this slander on November 18 in his first financial report given at the general meeting of the German Workers' Educational Society of London. Citing concrete facts the report exposed in detail the falsity of the accusation.

At this meeting the name of the relief committee was changed and it was reorganized. The new name decided upon was the Social-Democratic Committee for Assistance to the German Emigrants. (At that time and for many years after, the 1849 revolutionary organizations of the proletariat termed themselves "social-democratic". It was only after the World War that social-democracy became a symbol of treason to the revolutionary movement.) At this time the members of the committee were elected exclusively from the membership of the central committee of the Communist League. In addition to Marx, Bauer, and Pfender, there was chosen Engels, the chief collaborator of Marx (Engels had just arrived in London), and also August Willich, a former officer in the Prussian artillery, who had joined the Communist League before the revolution and had been in command of the "Volunteer Detachment" in the uprising at Pfaltz.

Replying to the slanderous attacks of the bourgeois-democratic leaders, Marx decisively emphasized the proletarian class character of the relief organization as indicated both in the members

composing the committee and in the name of the organization. He pointed out that neither the contributors nor those who had benefited from the aid given could have been mistaken in regard to its activities. The united-front from below! There should be the same relation to all victims of the counter-revolution, but a sharp delimitation between the proletarian and the bourgeois organizations. As Marx and Engels organized the relief it thus served likewise to strengthen the class-consciousness of the proletariat, to secure its political independence, and to build it into an independent revolutionary party.

Exposure of the Slanderers

In the beginning of March, 1850, this committee under the leadership of Marx issued the following appeal:

"As a consequence of the never-ending banishments from Switzerland and France the number of local emigrants needing assistance has grown enormously. There arrive almost every day new emigrants who are in such a condition that outside of the normal aid to them, extra aid is often needed for expenses for clothing. The appeals to our committee are never-ending. This is the more so because it seems that attempts to get aid from other organizations are futile. Through efforts of the local German workers and the emigrants themselves we have been able to get work for some of them. However, many branches that labor emigrants can work in outside of London are here for many reasons barred to them, principally because of the furious competition for jobs in the overpopulated city. Moreover, the exceptionally large influx of new emigrants results in the rapid growth of the list of those requiring relief from week to week. Notwithstanding the greatest care in dispensing the funds of the committee and in giving systematic relief only to the most needy—limited as this is also by the high prices of food products locally—the resources of the committee are rapidly dwindling. We fear that we shall soon be in a condition where we will not be able to save the unemployed emigrants from extreme poverty and the lack of shelter.

"In this situation we appeal again for aid to the party organizations in Germany itself. We remind you of the fact that to the degree in which the number of the emigrants is lessening in Switzerland and France, it is increasing in London. We hope things will not come to such a point that those who fought with arms in their hands for the honor and freedom of the

German people will be driven to beg for alms on the streets of London.

"We request that all contributions will be sent to the following address: Heinrich Bauer, 64 Dean St., London.

London, beginning of March, 1850.

Social-Democratic Emigration Committee; Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Bauer, A. Willich, Karl Pfender."

The reference to unsuccessful efforts to get relief from "other organizations" refer to the leaders of the bourgeois democrats, who during this time had succeeded in organizing two relief committees. These committees had hardly managed to collect anything at all but their continued intrigues against Marx and the Social-Democratic committee had interfered with the flow of contributions to this proletarian organization. Marx did not hesitate to brand those responsible for this shameful wrecking work. On April 16, 1850, he issued the following statement:

"The Berlin newspaper Evening Post contains the following communication from Stettin, dated April 11: 'With regard to the London emigrants the arrangement now is to send the money to Bucher, who has the connections with Schramm (Strogau) since the other two committees are not on good terms with each other and distribute the money through party channels.

"The fact is that there is in London only one emigrant committee, which was founded in September of last year under the leadership of the London emigrants. Up to the present the above-mentioned committee has had the possibility of giving relief to the arriving needy emigrants, who with the exception of four or five persons—have all turned to us for aid. It is true that the enormous number of incoming emigrants expelled from Switzerland has almost exhausted the funds of the committee. These funds have been distributed irrespective of their party affiliations equally among all those who proved their participation in the revolutionary movement in Germany and their need for relief. That the committee bears the name 'Social-Democratic' is not because it supports emigrants only who belong to that party but because it depends chiefly on the resources of this party as was explained also in the appeal issued in November of last year.

"Rumors to the effect that there are in London large sums of money for the banished, apparently originated in Switzerland in connection with a projected lottery for the benefit of the emigrants. These rumors resulted in a lot of requests for relief which our committee was not in a position to give satisfactory answers to. At the same time rumors purposely spread by the press about disagreements between the different relief

committees hindered the sending of sufficient funds to London. Our committee, desiring to ascertain the facts about the resources at the disposal of the other committees, proposed to the emigrants that they themselves arrange to have their representatives call on Gustav Struve, Rudolph Schramm and Louis Bauer (Stolk). This was done. The emigrants brought back the following replies:

"Mr. Schramm (Strega) stated that he did not belong to any emigrant committee, that he had merely received a certain number of lottery tickets from Galeer in Geneva with instructions to remit the money from their sale to Geneva. The committee existed only on paper.

"Mr. Struve said he had no money. All he had was lottery tickets which he had not yet managed to sell.

"Mr. Bauer (Stolk) made the following declaration in writing: 'In reply to the question asked by the emigrant Steiner, it is a fact that at present the local emigrant committee of the Democratic Association is not able to give relief even to a single political emigrant. The treasury to this committee would be empty after the payment of two pounds sterling and 15 shillings for relief.

"Struve and Schramm advised the emigrants to organize through their representatives or politically neutral persons a new emigrant committee. Our committee suggested to the emigrants that they express their attitude to this proposal. The following declaration by the emigrants was received in reply:

'To the Social-Democratic Emigrant Committee'

London, April 7, 1850.

'After discussions with reference to the handing over of our problems to a committee to be elected from our midst the undersigned emigrants deem it necessary to express to the members of the existing committee their most sincere gratitude for their activities and work. Our only desire is that these members may continue to bear the burden of our difficulties until the time when the approaching revolution awaited by us all will free them from this task.

'With brotherly greetings (the signatures follow.)'

"This declaration constitutes the best answer to the paragraph in the Berlin "Evening Post" and other slanderous articles in the press. We would not reply to such articles were it not that the interests of the needy emigrants demand an explanation of the above facts to the general public.

London, April 16, 1850.

Social-Democratic Emigrant Committee, K. Marx, chairman; G. Bauer, Fr. Engels, A. Willich, K. Pfender."

Several weeks after this committee made public its regular report. Like preceding reports this was not merely an account of the

finances. It includes an appeal to the party comrades to support the committee by further financial contributions. It again exposed the disorganizing activities of the bourgeois democrats, who had not ceased intriguing against the Social-Democratic committee.

"This committee," stated the report, "which was founded September 24, 1849, has from the very moment of its organization given relief for varying lengths of time to approximately a hundred emigrants. The total sum passing through its hands was 161 pounds sterling 6½ shillings (approximately \$500).

In addition, the workers' society satisfied pressing needs of individual emigrants by means of special collections. To some, work was furnished. The right was given all emigrants to use the rooms of the society and its newspapers.

"All expenditures have been subjected to the inspection of the German Workers Educational Society and approved by it. The expense accounts and receipts are in the custody of the treasurer of the committee and may be inspected at any time by contributors or their authorized agents.

"Mr. Struve, Bobzeen, Bauer (Stolk) and others have recently found it necessary to try to get funds from Germany for the benefit of the emigrants. With this purpose in view they have gathered around themselves some of the emigrants. Yesterday at a meeting they formed their committee. It seems to us that this new attempt to undermine our committee will meet with its proper evaluation and end in defeat as have all preceding attempts.

"As is evident from the financial statement, the treasury of the committee contains hardly enough money to last for another week. Moreover, every day new emigrants are asking for help. We are therefore again turning to the Social-Democrats with the appeal not to leave these emigrants to the mercy of fate and as quickly as possible to turn in their contributions to the treasurer: E. Pfender, 21 King St., London.

London, April 23, 1850.

Social-Democratic Emigrant Committee: K. Marx, chairman; A. Willich, Fr. Engels, K. Pfender, G. Bauer."

From the spring of 1850 the number of emigrants increased very fast. At this time "democratic" Switzerland—"free" Switzerland with its "right of asylum" which was never available at times when it was most needed—began, in order to curry the favor of the counter-revolutionary Prussian and Austrian governments to systematically banish thousands of emigrants who had counted on finding a temporary refuge there. The appeals and

reports of the committee of Marx showed, as we have already indicated, a big influx of emigrants to London. Financial contributions, however, instead of increasing, declined. The principal contributors did not possess sufficient means, and the hope of a speedy upsurge of the revolutionary wave had disappeared. In addition, the disorganizing machinations of the enemy committees—which were themselves absolutely unable to give any help to the emigrants—also influenced the cutting down of receipts of funds. On June 4, 1850, Marx's committee issued the following statement:

"Recently the funds available for the German emigrants have fallen so low that the emigrants are undergoing the greatest hardships. Those who are unemployed have been forced to spend whole weeks in the streets and the parks and are faced with starvation. Rumors about the different committees and especially about the distribution by the party of the money to the emigrants have likewise contributed in certain cases to the cutting-off of funds. Hr. Struve, Bobzeen and others have helped to bring this about by declaring that our committee supports only Communists.

"We have already stated once that we supported, without discrimination, those who are in need of aid. Our account books and receipts are evidence of this. They are accessible at any time for examination by contributors or their outhorized representatives. At a meeting arranged by the committee of Mr. Struve, Bobzeen and others the undersigned, Willich, put the question: which of those present had asked whether he was a Communist? No one answered.

"We declare that the above mentioned assertions of Mr. Struve, Bobzeen and others are lies and slanders. Thus the excuse which served in certain circles for discontinuing the sending of funds for the support of the London emigrants vanishes.

London, July 14, 1850.

"Social-Democratic Emigrant Committee: K. Marx, Fr. Engels, G. Bauer, A. Willich, K. Pfender."

New Methods of Relief

The following report of the committee shows that the weekly relief had been heavily cut down—from an average of 6 shillings to an average of 3 shillings. At the same time new forms of relief are mentioned, which the committee had devised for the lightening of the misery of the emigrants.

"In June," the report states, "the financial income was so

small while the hardships of the emigrants were so unbearable that it was decided to open an emigrant home and a dining room. The local workers' society, together with some of the emigrants who had found jobs, made possible the carrying out of this plan through their contributions. The house was furnished and other supplies are paid for out of the funds coming in. Up to the present 18 emigrants have been provided with rooms while food has been provided for about 40. Moreover, unemployed emigrants who were shoemakers have been employed to supply needy emigrants with shoes. The committee has succeeded in organizing a handicrafts group for the emigrants in this emigrant home. In this way part of the expense of their maintenance will be met from their wages. If this attempt justifies itself, it will be extended on a larger scale and brought to the attention of the public. The committee counts upon many financial contributions from Germany to sustain this beginning until the time when the emigrants will be in a position to provide for themselves.

London, July 30, 1850.

"Social-Democratic Emigrant Committee: Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, August Willich, Karl Pfender, Heinrich Bauer."

End of the Relief Committee

The labors of Karl Marx in securing relief for the London emigrants came to an end in September, 1850. The reasons which forced Marx and Engels to give up this work are to be found in the disagreements over principles and tactics then springing up in the Communist League. A split took place inside the League. While the majority of the central committee upheld the view-point of Marx the prevailing majority then of the London emigrants and members of the German Workers Educational Society followed his opponents—Willich, Schapper and others, who were in the minority on the central committee of the League.

The gist of the matter was that Marx and Engels thoroughly understood that a revolution cannot be "made" at a chosen moment in disregard of existing economic and political conditions. In 1850 they were of the opinion that a new revolution like the revolution of 1848 could come about only in consequence of a severe economic crisis. In the month of May, 1850, they still looked forward to the appearance in the very near future of an economic crisis in England. They judged that this crisis would be considerably sharper than previous ones and that it would be extended

to include industry, commerce and agriculture, and would, besides, spread throughout Europe.

This crisis did not, however, develop. On the contrary, economic conditions in Europe even improved. They convinced Marx that there could not be any question of an immediate revolution. Therefore the urgent tasks of the Communists must be those of strengthening the revolutionary organisations, agitational and propaganda work utilizing to the fullest possible extent every possibility for legal activity in the existing workers' societies, education in proletarian class-consciousness and the struggle for the freeing of the proletariat from political subserviency to the petty-bourgeois democrats.

The opponents of Marx thought otherwise. They said: "We must immediately come into power". Instead of soberly sizing up the political and economic conditions they were carried away on the wave of their own revolutionary emotion. Just as today, this ultra "left" tendency of the opponents of Marx turned in practice into a union with the right. The ultra "left" group of Willich and Schapper went hand-in-hand with the petty-bourgeois democracy.

That their point of view happened to be supported by many of the emigrants is to be explained to a considerable degree by the fact that from the middle of 1850 there took place a most significant change in the character of the emigration to London. While to that time proletarian elements had predominated, there now came a greatly increased influx of petty-bourgeoisie from Switzerland, Belgium and France. There arrived many small traders, handicraftsmen, many members of the intelligentsia, many former parliamentarians and journalists.

These petty-bourgeois elements carried on a noisy agitation, organized provisional future "governments" and "national committees" and put out many appeals with resounding, high-flown flowery phrases. In view of these manoeuvres of the petty-bourgeois democracy it was particularly important to guard the political, ideological and organisational independence of the proletarian Communist movement. This was the policy of Marx and Engels—the only correct and really revolutionary policy.

However, their ultra "left" opponents had a different stand-

point. They, as did the bourgeois democratic phrase-mongers, demanded an "immediate revolution", absolutely forgetting at the same time about the strengthening of the mass movement and in this way acting in reality for the benefit of the counter-revolution. The conflict which sprang up in connection with this in the middle of September, 1850, led also to a split in the Communist League. Marx and Engels, together with a number of their adherents, left the Social-Democratic Emigrant Committee and likewise the German Workers' Educational Society.

On September 17, 1850, Marx and Engels, together with Bauer and Pfender, published their last report. This concluded as follows:

"In view of the fact that the undersigned four members of the former Social-Democratic committee with the presentation of this report are leaving it, the German Workers' Educational Society had named a commission to audit the financial accounts. In their report of the 15th of this month they report that everything has been found in order.

"The undersigned consider it necessary to leave all books and receipts involving transactions of the committee with the former treasurer, Pfender, 21 King St.—in view of the fact that they are leaving both the committee and the German Workers' Educational Society and because of the necessity of preserving these records in case of any question or demand of the public.

"The contributors should therefore designate their authorized agents in London for the inspection of the books and receipts in possession of the former treasurer.

London, September 17, 1850.

K. Marx, G. Bauer, K. Pfender, F. Engels."

With the exit of Marx and his adherents from the committee for emigrants' relief the leadership of the committee fell into the hand of the ultra "left" group. These leaders undertook, together with the leaders of the petty-bourgeois democracy, political actions, the result of which was that the organization of emigrant aid lost its former political character. The organization was no longer as it had been under Marx—a weapon for the creation of an independence of the proletariat against the petty-bourgeois democracy. The organization became converted into a purely economic organization concerned with philanthropic activities. However, even thus the committee continued to exist only a few weeks longer. The proletarians among the political emigrants were politically demoralized by the example of their leaders. If the leaders joined

hands with the petty-bourgeois democracy in political actions, then the individuals in the rank-and-file preferred to turn for help directly to the more well-to-do bourgeois emigrants. In this way the "left" leaders threw them into the arms of the petty-bourgeois democracy.

The Communist Trial in Cologne

In London there remained about ten persons faithful to Marx: Wilhelm Liebknecht, Eccarius, Pfender, and others. Insofar as it was possible Marx guided from London the activities of the Central Committee of the League which had been transferred to Cologne, and which included the district committees that had remained faithful to Marx. The new central committee succeeded in retaining under its control many committees, mainly those in western Germany.

The League carried on an underground propaganda. Through secret circulars, the sending of emissaries, and by leading the remaining workers' organizations, the committee carried on its work of education in the spirit of the *Communist Manifesto*. However, this activity was very soon cut short. In May, 1851, one of the emissaries of the Central Committee at Cologne was arrested. Documents found on him disclosed the existence and activities of, the League, and an end was put to its activities. All nine members of the Central Committee at Cologne were arrested and held for trial on charges of "treason".

We cannot close our review of the "labor defense" activities of Marx without noting his role in the Communist trial at Cologne. This trial ended in November, 1852, with the sentencing of seven of the accused to imprisonment in a fortress dungeon for many years. The Prussian government sought to utilize this trial to strengthen its position by the exaggeration of the danger represented by the "red spectre", thus making itself out to be the protector of society and the individual. The prosecutor and the police resorted to the most despicable means—the preparation of forged documents, provocations, bribery, and false witnesses. They considered all these means perfectly proper in order to make the accused appear as dangerous criminals.

All these machinations, however, were exposed through the tire-

less energy of Marx. Just at this moment of intense and prolonged struggle he was in a most unfavorable situation, struggling against the most frightful privations. A few weeks before the trial he wrote to Engels:

"My wife is sick, Jenny (the oldest daughter of Marx) is sick. Lena (housekeeper for the Marx family) is also ill with some kind of nervous fever. I cannot call a doctor as I have no money for medicine. During eight to ten days my family has existed only on bread and potatoes and it is not at all certain that I can get even these tomorrow. It would be very good—and perhaps I ought to wish it—that the landlady would throw me out of the apartment. I would then be freed at least from a debt of 22 pounds. Then there are bills of the baker, the milkman, for meat, etc., which are also pressing me."

Under these hard conditions Marx carried on the struggle against enormously stronger opponents, defending the honor of the accused and exposing to the public the vicious manoeuvres of the police and the government. Before and during the trial, Marx, his wife, and a few party comrades in London worked feverishly in order to reveal the machinations of the police agents, who had forged incriminating documents in London. Marx and his comrades had to expose these fabrications and get the material besides in good time to Cologne. The details of this work may be judged from a letter which the wife of Marx wrote to a friend in America:

"From here—London—we must get to Cologne proof exposing the forgeries. My husband works the whole day and late into the night. The material has to be copied six or seven times and sent by different channels via Frankfort to Paris, to be despatched from there to Germany. This is because all letters addressed to my husband in his name as well as all letters sent to Cologne are opened and confiscated by the police. At the present moment a battle is going on between the police on one side and my husband on the other."

"You must pardon the bad handwriting as I also take part in the copying and my fingers ache. We have just received from Veert (Veert was a staunch friend of Marx and Engels and an active member of the Communist League. He was a poet and had the distinction of having been termed 'the poet of the German proletariat' by Engels.—Ed.) and Engels a lot of different business addresses, to be used in ensuring the actual receipt of material. We have organized a bureau now. Two or three do the writing, others run about, three are busy raising funds in

order to make possible the continuance of the work of exposing this incredible scandal. Three of my children are also playing about singing, and more than once arousing a calling-down from their father."

As soon as he learned of the conviction, Marx wrote a pamphlet entitled *Revelations in Connection with the Communist Trial at Cologne*. This was published in Basel, Switzerland, and Boston, U. S. A. The pamphlet is a model "Labor Defense" pamphlet. It tells in great detail about the forgeries, lies, and slanders of the public prosecutor and police and the cowardice and servility of the jurors. It exposes all the villany of semi-feudal, semi-bourgeois "justice". Along with this it points out the political significance of the trial in which the reactionary "justice" of the feudal and big bourgeois classes by its vile lies and fraud condemned the representatives of the revolutionary proletarian party struggling for the political organization of the proletariat and its leading role in the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

Though the majority of the accused were condemned, the "victory" of the government was converted—thanks to the "labor defense" activities of Marx—into a moral and political defeat of reactionary "justice" and the corrupt police.

The self-sacrificing, enormous energy with which Marx and those nearest to him worked in order to rescue the accused who embodied the revolutionary proletariat facing the "justice" of the ruling class and in order to expose to the furthestest degree possible the government and the police,—this self-sacrifice and energy of Marx can and must serve in our own day as an example for every member of the labor defense movement.



PART TWO

**KARL MARX AS THE ORGANIZER
OF RELIEF TO THE VICTIMS OF
THE VERSAILLES TERROR—BY
C. KAHN**

The Paris Commune: The First Attempt to Establish the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

The great significance the Paris Commune of 1871 had in relation to the development of the first international organization of the working class—the First International—is well-known. The events which took place in the spring of that year had an enormous influence not only on the development of the workingclass movement in the epoch of the First International, but they were, in the fullest sense of the word, of historical significance to the whole world. Successive generations of workers have never forgotten them, nor will they be forgotten by the workers of our time. The proletariat of the Soviet Union, which has already entered upon the building of Socialism, commemorates March 18th every year. Proletarians of the capitalist countries—particularly those of France—recall on March 18th and the days of the bloody week of May the heroic struggles of the Communards and lower their banners in honor of those martyrs.

It is not our object in this pamphlet to relate in detail the heroic struggle of the Communards. The task of this pamphlet is to acquaint its readers with certain little known aspects of the activities of the leading organ of the First International—the General Council in London. *These activities, which were under the direct guidance of the leader of the First International, Karl Marx, consisted in the organization of material relief and moral support to the Communards.*

Before dealing with this phase of the activities of Marx and the General Council it is necessary to give a short account of the Commune itself, its aims and the lessons to be derived from its experiences. Without this many of our readers would not understand the exceptional solicitude and attention which the workers

of the First International bestowed on the defeated Communards, on its rank-and-file members as well as on its leaders.

The revolution of March 18, 1871, was accomplished by the united efforts of the proletariat and the petty-bourgeoisie of Paris. The long determined struggle against the government of Napoleon III which had brought the country to unprecedented national humiliation and had nearly destroyed it, had contributed to the bringing together of these two classes and led their union.

The eighteen years of the imperial regime had laid heavy burdens on the backs of the working people. The Empire, which had arisen as a result of the coup d'etat of December 2, 1851, had, in fact, wiped out all the gains of the revolution of 1848. Instead of democratic liberties and republican institutions there had been set up throughout the country a system of absolutely arbitrary administration. France was in the grip of the "cassock and the sabre." It was governed by the priests and the military.

The big bourgeoisie, in whose interests the president of the republic, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, had been turned into the emperor, had been frightened at the June uprising of the proletariat in Paris and had been glad to renounce the political liberties not essential to it under the circumstances. Only under the protection of a strong authority could it continue unhindered the exploitation of the proletariat, ruining along with it a wide strata of the small property owners—the handicraftsmen and traders.

During the years of the Empire industrial capital was greatly developed, with a considerable worsening of the conditions of the lower strata of society to the point where these became at times unbearable. The labor and revolutionary movements in France consequently did not cease during the fifties and the sixties of the nineteenth century.

The Franco-Prussian War, which had begun in the summer of 1870, revealed completely the rottenness of the Empire. The people replied to the catastrophe of Sedan, which had resulted in the destruction of the French armies, with the revolution of September 4th and the overthrow of the Empire. However, the unpreparedness of the revolutionary parties for seizing the power led to the formation of a bourgeois provisional government of "National Defense", which had inherited from the Empire "not only a heap

of ruins but also its fear of the working class" (Marx). Power had been given to one section of the bourgeoisie in place of another. One bourgeois government had replaced another. The class struggle further developed into a still more complicated situation.

After the Sedan victory the Prussian armies continued their advance and soon laid siege to Paris. The already difficult conditions of the masses were greatly worsened by the new hardships produced by the siege. The criminal policies pursued by the government of "National Defense" led to the further coming together of the proletariat and petty-bourgeoisie. The union between them was now decisively strengthened.

"The Commune was an elemental upheaval," wrote Lenin. "It was not planned in advance. The unsuccessful war with Germany; the sufferings during the siege; unemployment among the proletariat and ruination of the petty-bourgeoisie; the indignation of the masses against the upper class and against those in charge, who had manifested utter incapacity; the confused fermentation within the working class; the unsatisfactory state of their conditions, with their aspirations for a different social structure; the reactionary composition of the National Assembly which caused apprehensions for the fate of the republic,—all these and many other factors combined to precipitate the Parisian population into the revolution of March 18.

The attempt to disarm the workers and the handicraftsmen of Paris and to take their cannon from the National Guard led to the banishment of the "lawful" rulers of France from the capital and to the establishment in Paris of the new government, which had come forth from the depths of the nation.

For 72 days the proletariat of Paris held the power in their hands. Notwithstanding the unfavorable conditions and the short period of its existence,

"The Commune was able to institute a number of measures which suffice to characterize its fundamental significance and aims. The Commune" continued Lenin, "replaced the standing army—that blind agent of the ruling classes—with the whole armed people. It decreed the separation of church from state, abolished the allowance in the state budget for support of the church and gave public education a really secular character,—thus dealing a strong blow against the gendarmes in cassocks."

Consistently carrying out the policy of favoring the toiling masses the Commune, for the first time in the history of the world,

actually demolished the governmental apparatus of the bourgeoisie and took the first steps in the direction of socialism. The government of the Commune began the introduction of workers' control over industry. It started handing over to the workers some of the industrial enterprises which had been abandoned by the owners.

For 72 days the struggle continued between those who had raised the banner of revolt in the revolutionary city and the bourgeois government set up at Versailles, which was directed by that mortal enemy of the people—the "bloodstained dwarf" Thiers and the venal, hypocritical minister of state, Favre.

The first acts of the new workers power were met by the bourgeoisie of France and the rest of the world with slanders, wrecking activities, and the organization of intervention. There were no lies too dirty and foul for the venal bourgeois newspapers of the whole world to hurl at the "cut-throats" and "robbers" of Paris.

Thiers and Favre could count not only on the active support of the bankers and industrialists but to them were extended as well the friendly arms of the governments of the various countries of Europe, including even help of every kind from that very government of Prince Bismarck who was the real leader in the establishment of the German Empire as a result of the Franco-Prussian War.

Isolated by being cut off from the provinces and from the other big cities of France and in fact from the whole world, the Paris Commune was forced in this isolation and under exceptionally difficult circumstances to fight off counter-revolution both internal and external, at the same time awaiting a stab in the back from the German troops friendly to Versailles.

Unfortunately, the Commune was too late in taking decisive measures against the counter-revolutionists. The defenders of the Commune, not clearly enough comprehending the aims and problems of the struggle and the overwhelming majority being victims of various petty-bourgeois and reformist ideas, failed to utilize the favorable opportunity for destroying the Versailles counter-revolution. They did not even take over the treasures of the great Bank of France nor were they able to organize their military forces. It was no wonder then that by the end of April the troops of the

bourgeoisie had already noticeably begun to close in on the Communards. By the end of May they had managed to penetrate into the limits of the revolutionary capital.

From May 21-28 there were savage protracted street battles which marked the bloody week of May. The proletariat and handicraftsmen of Paris compelled the butchers of Versailles to purchase their victory at a high price. The number of Communards slain without trial reached 30,000. Over 13,000 defenders of the Commune were afterwards victims of the class "justice" of Versailles. The Commune was overthrown, but nevertheless the very fact that the proletariat had seized power and organized a government of a completely new type, and the social-economic activities of the Commune directed in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the population of Paris and France itself,—in fact, the whole history of the seventy-two day rule of the workers—these matters had tremendous consequences for the world proletariat. This was an experience the world proletariat had to take into account in its future struggles.

On the basis of the lessons and mistakes of the Commune, Marx—and after him Lenin—worked out the theory and practice of the class struggle of the proletariat. Thousands and thousands of the fighters for socialism have learned from them the strategy and tactics of the revolution. The experience of the Commune proved beyond any question that it is impossible to throw off the yoke of capitalism without a party of the proletariat, and that it is only by the merciless suppression of all enemies of the social revolution that the way to Communism can be revealed to the workers in all countries.

Tasks of the International in Connection with the Downfall of the Paris Commune

Long before the actual defeat of the Commune and the bloody week of May, Marx had foreseen the possibility and probability of a tragic ending to the March 18 revolution and clearly realized the necessity in this grave situation where the French proletariat had to fight the bourgeoisie, of drawing the necessary inferences. The fatal mistakes made by the Central Committee of the National Guard and then by the Commune itself were apparent to him from

the very beginning. These mistakes had arisen out of the inability to understand the class character of the struggle between Paris and Versailles and had made it possible to organize correctly the struggle against the counter-revolution inside and outside of the country.

Notwithstanding the receipt in London of personal letters from Paris that spoke of the enthusiasm with which the proclamation of the Commune had been received by the masses in Paris, Marx had already on the 11th and 12th of April referred in one of his letters to the fact that "Our friends in Paris will surely perish as a result of their simplemindedness" and expressed his apprehensions for the fate of the Commune. Later on the inevitability of a tragic ending to the struggle became all the clearer and more certain. By the middle of May, Marx and likewise the other members of the General Council of the First International no longer had any hopes for the victory of the revolution. Not a single bourgeois newspaper transmitted news of the Commune and the Communards. A letter sent from Paris April 24 and received in London the beginning of May¹ from the Russian revolutionist and defender of the Commune—Elizabeth Dmitriev—was filled with anxiety. The General Council had already on May 16 notified one of the Belgian socialists of the urgent necessity of preparations being made in London for the reception of all those "who may be barely able to escape from Paris". It had declared at the same time that in the future fugitive Communards could not be maintained in Belgium because of the hostility of the bourgeois government to the Commune and the Communards.

Anxiety over the fate of the Communards and the first news of the beginning of the Versailles terror required the General Council to devote the whole of its regular meeting on May 23 to the examination of the problems concerned with the organization of relief to the victims of the counter-revolution and with the organization of the resistance to the European reaction which had already appeared and which had tried at the same time with the stifling of the Commune to wipe out the First International and the international workers' movement. Marx, who had just recovered from an attack of sickness which had compelled him to miss a number of regular meetings of the General Council, no longer

concealed his apprehension for the fate of the Commune and spoke of the necessity of the struggle against the united forces of the bourgeois reaction.

"He fears that the end is near," so records the short minutes of the speech of Marx, *"but declares that the Commune itself is eternal and that it can not be destroyed. It will assert itself again until the working class becomes free."* The destruction of the Commune was in Marx's opinion a result of the joint efforts of Bismarck, Thiers, and Favre, united to crush the proletariat. The establishment of unity between the higher classes against the masses is an old story.

"Long ago in the 11th century when there was a war between the French and Norman knights and the peasants rebelled, the knights at once dropped their disputes and united to put down the peasant movement."

In Marx's opinion it was useless to turn to Versailles with protests against the "brutalities" and "savagery" in connection with the Communards, as had been proposed by some members of the General Council. It was the work of the International to expose the acts of the Versailles government. To "protest" would merely be to *"complain of their conduct to the very cut-throats themselves"*. It was necessary to propose to the English members of the International that they at once arrange public meetings, mobilize public opinion, and approach the English government with the request that it take a position against the brutalities being perpetrated by the French troops. Means should be sought also to influence the Belgian government, which had threatened to close its borders to the Communards.

The first fugitives from the Commune had already arrived in London soon after the end of the bloody week of May. From that time on the situation compelled the General Council for a long time to concentrate almost all its attention on the work of relief for the emigrants of the Commune and obliged it to transform itself into a real "Relief Committee"—the LABOR DEFENSE LEAGUE of that period. For Marx himself and also for the other active members of the General Council and particularly for Engels and the treasurer, Young, there now came a period of great difficulty. Worry over the emigrants of the Commune and their

families compelled them, and of course Marx most of all, "*for five months completely to put aside all other matters*", and devote themselves entirely to new tasks the satisfactory solution of which demanded the most extraordinary care. This situation put an enormous strain on the International.

The obstacles which stood in the way of the efforts of the General Council to organize relief for the victims of the Versailles terror consisted not only of material difficulties. The basic difficulty was most of all the fact, that the very organization itself for the relief of the emigrants of the Commune, took place under circumstances of exceptionally vicious baiting of the International and its General Council. It was this fact that in the words of Marx "*furnished the reasons to the press and governments of Europe to crush the defeated Communards of Paris under a flood of the foulest slanders.*"

Thus immediately after the defeat of the Commune, there was laid on the shoulders of the General Council and of Marx not only the tasks of collecting the necessary finances for the relief organization, but the task also of organizing the struggle against the widespread campaign of the bourgeois press of the whole world. The object of this campaign was to blacken the character of the heroes and martyrs of the Commune, presenting them to the public of Europe as ordinary criminals, and thus making it easier for the bourgeois governments of Europe to accede to the demands of the Versailles government. The latter also insisted that the right of asylum did not apply to the emigrants of the Commune, and that therefore they must be sent back to France for trial and punishment like common thieves and murderers.

The Struggle Against the Extradition of Communard Emigrants to the Versailles Government

That the possibility of the handing over of the Communards to the butchers of Versailles was a most threatening menace during the summer months of 1871 was shown particularly by the ambiguous conduct of the governments of England and Switzerland, countries which previously had afforded adequate refuge to the democratic refugees from France. Gladstone, who had become head of the English government, had indeed refused to grant the re-

quests of the French government in the form they had been presented but at the same time he had pointed out the necessity of a preliminary investigation to establish to what degree the offences of each individual Communard could be classified as crime. However, despite their confidence in the impossibility of the handing over of Communards by the authorities of liberal England, Marx and other members of the General Council could not but worry over the fate of individual Communards. Already on December 19, 1871, Marx, much worried, reported to the General Council that he had received from a person closely connected with the English Ministry of Home Affairs information that the English government intended to "*begin the prosecution of individual emigrants under the pretext that they were charged with criminal actions*". Marx further remarked that he would not be surprised if Gladstone would prosecute the emigrants in return for the renewal of the profitable commercial treaty in the interests of the English traders and manufacturers.

The conduct of the Swiss government had even more excited the suspicions of the General Council. Philip Becker, who had been the leader of the Geneva federation of the International, wrote to London that "*The Swiss government not only vacillates greatly, two arrests having already taken place here, but in addition we have every reason to fear the arrested will be handed over.*" The arrest at the demand of Favre, of the Communard Rosios, and his being freed only after a prolonged and insistent campaign in the socialist and democratic press, showed absolutely what could be expected from the petty-bourgeois government of Switzerland.

While the political line of the English and Swiss governments on the question of the right of asylum for emigrants of the Commune contained as yet only the suggestion of danger, the policies of the other countries, which bordered on France were in this matter most threatening. The Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs, in reply to a question in the Chamber of Deputies, announced in the language of Favre and Thiers that the Communards were "*people soaked in sin whom retribution must strike down*" and that from the standpoint of the Belgian government they were not "political emigrants". The Belgian workers and internationalists had to exert all their strength to get into Holland and England the Com-

munards who had secretly crossed the Belgian border, and thus prevent the Belgian police, who were "*quite prepared to carry out the work of the French government*", from arresting and handing them over.

The governments of Spain and Italy had immediately closed their borders against the emigrants of the Commune and declared in unambiguous language, their readiness to hand over any Communards, who having succeeded in escaping the persecution of the Versailles terror, might slip through their borders. The government of Bismarck followed the same lines, having already rendered Versailles the most invaluable assistance, and remaining to the end the deadly enemy of the Commune and the Communards.

Finally also the Pope of Rome deemed it necessary and timely to raise his voice against the Communards and the International, revealing his position, in his answer to the greetings of a delegation of Swiss pilgrims. Thus giving his "sanction" to the bloody work of Versailles.

In the report by Marx wherein he informed the General Council of this event, the answer of the pope to the pilgrims is thus given: "*Your country is a country of great freedom, but it gives refuge to many evil people—who want to destroy all law and order and want to render Europe that same sort of service which they rendered Paris.*" Then, speaking further of the desirability of handing over the Communards to Versailles, and designating the Communards as "incarnate fiends", the hypocritical old man at the same time stated "*the only thing we can do for them (the Communards) is to pray for them.*"

In this way we see that there was a union of the sinful lands and the holy heavens against the fugitives of the Commune in the summer of 1871 and that the threat of handing them over to the tortures of Versailles was a terrible and ever present danger. Consequently, one of the fundamental tasks of the International in the months immediately following the overthrow of the Commune, had to be the organization of public opinion in Western Europe against the demands of Versailles. THE OBJECT OF THE BROAD POLITICAL CAMPAIGN which was developed by the General Council of the International, under the immediate and direct leadership of Marx, was therefore on the one hand, to RE-

VEAL THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL NATURE of the March 18 revolution together with the exposure of the lies and slanders circulated regarding the Commune and the Communards by the butchers of Versailles, and on the other hand to TEAR THE MASK FROM THE ACTIVITIES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THIERS AND FAVRE, and expose these champions of "private property, right and justice" not only to the broad masses in Europe and America but also to the international bourgeoisie itself. The successful solution of this two-fold problem was for a long time a most difficult and complicated task and naturally, most of all from Marx himself, the ability not only swiftly to analyze the complicated political situation but also that of swiftly finding the most vulnerable and weakest places in the position of the class enemies of the proletariat, in order to make their blows the more effective and the heavier.

The First International of the organized working class,—weak already for one thing in that it did not rest on the broad strata of a matured industrial proletariat,—had to battle against the united strength of European reaction, which was in a position where it had at its disposal unlimited material for the organization of its victory. It must not be forgotten that a whole series of measures both by the Commune itself and by individual Communards (the shooting of hostages, particularly of priests and the archbishop Darboy, and the burning down of various buildings, etc.) were all utilized most skilfully by Versailles to draw to the side of the French bourgeoisie and to arouse against the fighters of revolutionary Paris, not only the upper strata of the bourgeoisie throughout the world, but also the broad strata of the middle and small property owners. The traitorous conduct of the leaders of the English trade unionists, who condemned the General Council because it had recognized the justice of all the acts of the Commune, showed that the French bourgeoisie had managed to win over to its side even quite a big part of the English proletariat.

Thus right after the defeat of the Commune one of the most important and pressing tasks of the General Council was to secure as much as possible a much faster distribution of the MANIFESTO OF THE INTERNATIONAL ON THE CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE—an immortal masterpiece of Marx. This manifesto

had not only to present the revolutionary intent of the Communards in its real light, but it also had to expose to the whole civilized world the counter-revolutionary murderers of these Communards.

It was not difficult beforehand to foresee the reaction of the bourgeois press of the world to the burning words which make up the proletarian manifesto. What was important was as quickly as possible to break down that conspiracy of silence by which the bourgeois press would meet the new production of Marx. It was essential to force it to comment on the manifesto, and thus reveal the document to the largest possible circle of readers and secure for it the largest possible circulation.

Foreseeing the possibility of the conspiracy of silence against the manifesto, Marx and his friends took measures beforehand for its widest circulation. Packages of the manifesto were sent by them to the individual section of the International as soon as it came off the printing press. Single copies were sent to the editors of all newspapers in accordance with personal instructions by Marx. They were mailed also to addresses of individual politicians. Marx himself hastily sent out copies of the manifesto to most of his personal friends and acquaintances, who were scattered all over the world. These personal activities of Marx and his friends—many traces of which we find in letters preserved by contemporaries, resulted in the swift spreading of the manifesto. Engels tells in a letter of his, of the "frightful noise" it provoked in London. The manifesto compelled the bourgeois papers to speak about the crimes committed, not by the Communards, but by the Versailles government.

"At first there was an effort to maintain silence, but it did not succeed," wrote Engels in this connection. *"On Wednesday the 14th there appeared a denunciation in the Evening Standard. On the 15th the Daily News printed an extract which filled most of two big pages of the paper. Then the Echo, on Saturday the Spectator, the Graphic, Pall-Mall Gazette, an editorial in the Telegraph,—thus the work was accomplished. The Times came out on Monday with an editorial, which it was easy to bombard. Then again there was the Standard and again the Times. By this time all*

London was talking about us. Of course it was a continuous howling."

Marx himself wrote about the enormous impression made by the manifesto, speaking about the "devilish rumpus" called forth by it and declaring that he "*had the honor himself to be at that moment the person most slandered in the whole city of London and the one most threatened.*" His friends and acquaintances informed Marx of the effect produced all over Europe by the manifesto. Indeed it became the target of that "*fury of the philistines throughout the whole world*" which Marx wrote about in a letter to one of his friends just after the issuance of the manifesto.

Most important of all was, however, the fact that the International had been able to find a most potent means of propaganda in the bourgeois press itself for the defense of the Communards which were forced by the manifesto to drop their tactics of maintaining silence in regard to all matters connected with the Commune. This in turn gave the possibility of utilizing the pages of the bourgeois press itself for the defense of the Communards and their actions, by sending to the editors letters and material refuting the charges. It is unnecessary to say that most of these letters and material were written by Karl Marx himself, who continued after the defeat of the Commune unceasingly to defend at every possible opportunity the Commune and the Communards. It was Marx who turned the attention of the members of the General Council to the false news spread by the English press in the matter of the Commune and to the forgeries of the French and Prussian police. "*The English press stands out as the police and the bloodhounds of Thiers,*" he declared. "*It invents slanders against the Commune and against the International in order to assist his bloody policy.*"

It is not possible here to deal in detail with all the articles by Marx which appeared in the press, nor to dwell on minute particulars of this struggle, which during the summer and autumn of 1871 was borne almost entirely by Marx. With the active support of Engels, Marx succeeded not only in repulsing numerous and persistent attacks by the bourgeois press which persisted in openly spreading the most fantastic "information" about the "horrors" of the Commune and the "secrets" of the International, but

he was able also during this struggle to strike back at all enemies of the working class and of the Commune.

The task of exposing the lying and slanderous reports in the bourgeois newspapers was made supremely difficult in that afterwards it was shown that these very newspapers refused to act as a forum for Marx and the International and they generally refused to give space in their pages to the letters sent them. Marx and the International therefore had to utilize as fully as possible English and German papers which were friendly to the proletariat but which had comparatively a small circulation among the masses. At the same time they did not abandon the struggle for utilizing those bourgeois papers which had a much larger circle of readers in order thus to spread the real facts about the Commune and propagandize the idea of internationalism. It is not surprising that Marx and his friends of the General Council tried by the most various means to get their open letters, their exposures and refutations, into the pages of the very bourgeois papers which habitually published false information in order to deceive their readers.

An example of the wonderful cleverness with which Marx conducted this struggle for a wider forum for the idea of internationalism and for the defense of the Commune is the story of what occurred to the editor of one of the widely circulated London bourgeois papers who was cunningly obliged by Marx to print the truth about the Commune and the government of Versailles. The incident took place at the end of June when this newspaper printed an article in which the accusations made by Marx against Favre and other ministers of the Versailles government in the "Civil War" were designated as lies and slanders.

Marx, sure that Greenwood, editor of the paper, would not print his refutations and aware of the importance of getting his proofs into the pages of this newspaper itself, resorted to an extraordinary and cunning scheme. He sent a letter to the editor of the paper in which he publicly denounced this very editor as a "slanderer." *"It is not my fault,"* wrote Marx, addressing himself to the editor of the paper, *"that you are as haughty as you are ignorant. If we were living on the Continent I would demand satisfaction from you in another form."*

This challenge to a duel—utterly unexpected from a person like

Marx—was made for the purpose of playing upon the weakness of this journalist for sensationalism. Marx's object was achieved. Greenwood,—as Marx himself tells in one of his letters,—fell into the trap and did exactly what Marx wanted. He reprinted word for word the accusations in the manifesto of the International against Favre and Co. *EXPOSURE OF THE ACTS OF THE GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTES PRECISELY ONE OF THE MOST ESSENTIAL PARTS OF THAT TACTIC, WHICH IN MARX'S OPINION, HAD AIDED THE INTERNATIONAL IN ITS STRUGGLE WITH THE WORLD COUNTER-REVOLUTION.* This tactic, as is well-known, was directed against Thiers and Favre. The exposure of the criminal activities of the members of the Versailles government finally contributed toward the easing of the conditions of the Communard victims in the Versailles prisons, and towards the betterment of the situation of the emigrants of the Commune outside the borders of France over whom hung the constant threat of being handed over to the military courts.

The Exposure of the Criminal Activities of the Members of the Versailles Government and of Other Enemies of the Commune and the Communards

Marx's personal letters, more than anything else, attest the significance which he attached to the exposure of the "people of the 4th of September." He wrote to the English Professor Beesley shortly after the downfall of the Commune: "*I required that all the material immediately be sent me in London for the exposure of the members of the National Defense (Ed. note—the Versailles government) in order with the aid of this to restrain if only in some degree the fury of the enemies of the Commune. Then the plan of the Versaillese would be partly shipwrecked.*"—"Would it not be better to hide in a safe place the material which compromises the Versailles gang?," he wrote again on May 13 to the Communards Frankel and Varlen. In the "Civil War in France" Marx put forth definite, concrete, accusations against the leaders of the French bourgeoisie—against the forger Favre, the speculator Pekar, against Ferris and Thiers who had made millions out of the coffers of the treasury—, and had exposed to the whole world these

fighters for "right and justice", these defenders of bourgeois property and the bourgeois republic.

The intensification of the Versailles terror and the vicious circulars of Favre, who was not satisfied with the mass butchery in Paris and the shootings in Versailles, and was demanding that the governments of Europe prosecute the members of the International and hand over to the military courts ever more new victims, obliged Marx not only to continue the exposure begun in the Manifesto but also to endeavor in every possible way to utilize this weapon of publicity on a wider scale.

Already on June 13 the General Council, in answer to the vile fabrications of Favre, had published in the *Times* an open letter under the signature of its secretary Hels. The contents of this letter had been approved June 11 with Marx, Engels, and other members present. WITHOUT ANY DOUBT THIS LETTER WAS DRAWN UP BY MARX HIMSELF. This letter contains a definite threat to send out the "*circular concerning Jules Favre to all the cabinets in Europe, drawing special attention of the latter to the documents which were published in Paris at the inquest over Mueller.*" Then at the suggestion of Marx, made in view of reports having been received that Favre was planning to resign the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs, the General Council unanimously decided to issue a circular letter concerning Jules Favre and send it to all the courts in Europe, informing them in advance that the man who had been publicly unmasked as the forger of various documents for mercenary motives, was preparing to occupy the position of chief justice of the Supreme Court. The necessity of preventing the possible appearance of the murderer in the role of head judge of his victims was clear to the members of the General Council.

Among the papers of Marx we find many traces of his persistent labor in the preparation of material for this proposed NEW CIRCULAR OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL, which was to be a tremendous accusation not only against the single forger Favre but also against all of his associates. IT WAS TO CONTAIN A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AND THE DOCUMENTAL GROUNDS FOR THE CHARGES AGAINST THE LEADERS OF THE VERSAILLES GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD BEEN

FORMULATED BY MARX IN THE FIRST PART OF THE
"CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE".

Other circumstances during the summer of 1871 also drove Marx to the collection and preparation of material for unmasking the individual criminal acts of Favre & Co. Marx, in answer to many declarations that he included slanderous personal attacks on political opponents in the Manifesto, had assumed personally full responsibility for the various accusations against Favre & Co. He could therefore expect that the insolent politicians of Versailles would undertake court action against him.

Two notebooks, which belonged to Marx, and which are now preserved in the archives of the Institute of Marx and Engels, show that Marx had with great thoroughness prepared himself for a new conflict with the butchers of the Commune, and with this object in mind had carefully worked over and systemized the material for his projected new work.

Of special interest to us in connection with this question is the first of these notebooks, which has a heading by Marx dated May, 1871, but the particular contents of which were not finished earlier than July or August. In this notebook we find various material directed against the leaders of the Versailles government, composed principally of excerpts from the London newspapers. In trying to get together the largest possible amount of material exposing Favre & Co., Marx regularly looked over the different London papers, usually marking with a red pencil the most interesting and significant articles. Consequently the contents of 48 pages of the first notebook is made up of an assortment of newspaper reports which he had read, marked and then either at once cut out and pasted or else copied into the notebook that which seemed to him important and significant. He put into the notebook likewise also detailed oral and written evidence he had gathered, directed against the Versailles tyrants. From the character of these writings and clippings, it is evident that Marx filled up several notebooks with such material and that he worked during all the summer months of 1871 on the collection of this material. At the beginning he selected articles and references concerning individual members of the Versailles government—Favre, Thiers, Trochu and others. At the end of the notebook there is a table of contents

of the material included. Later this method of systemization was dropped and suitable newspaper material put into the notebooks merely to keep the related material together. It is impossible here to reproduce all the varied material which was copied down. We will merely point out that the figures of Favre and Thiers occupied the center of Marx's attention and that most of the collected material concerns them.

Marx most carefully recorded everything that could back up the accusations against Favre made by the Communard journalist Millere, who showed that Favre had committed crimes which still remained unpunished—namely the embezzlement of an enormous inheritance which he had gotten control of by means of forgery. All that could, even if only indirectly, establish the guilt of Favre is to be found in the pages of Marx's notebook. Favre who had betrayed and sold out his country to Bismarck and had "licked the portfolio of the latter", Favre who had used his high position for the promotion of his Bonapartist brother to a leading post, Favre who had personally distributed, in the provinces, his own busts, and had arranged elegant dinners during the siege of Paris when the masses were starving,—it was material establishing these and other charges against Favre that filled this notebook.

Nor did Marx forget the "degenerate"—Thiers. *He cut from one newspaper a characterization of Thiers by the English Minister Disraeli. Disraeli termed the head of the Versailles government 'an ignorant little intriguer who was paying his mistresses out of the public sale of government posts.'*" Marx carefully copied down in his notebook a long extract from letters just received by him from an English democrat. These contained new proof of the dishonest manipulations of Thiers on the London Stock Exchange. Marx made the notation that this "old cobra" had, with the help of old laws of the time of the Empire, destroyed the right of public assembly. In the "May" notebook Marx collected likewise exhaustive material against Thiers. Apart from this material directly involving Favre and Thiers, the first notebook contains the most various evidence of the criminal acts of other members and officials of the Versailles government.

In the second notebook, which contains almost wholly extracts from newspapers of the period of the Commune and which is dated

by Marx, July, 1871, we find similarly a large amount of material exposing Versailles. Here Marx directed his attention especially to matters involving the personal criminal activities of the individual members of the Versailles government. Apart from additional new data unmasking the chief leaders of the Versailles counter-revolution we find in this notebook copies of the minutes of the trial of General Gallifet, which had been taken away from Communards in the prefecture of the police department of Paris. It confirms rumors, long circulated in Paris, concerning the foul adventures of this butcher of the Commune, who had no scruples during the years of the Empire to live on a fortune acquired through the running of a gambling house by his wife. We find here also exhaustive material characterizing the criminal activities of almost all the generals of the government of "National Defense" and of the Versailles government. Marx drew attention especially to the dark figure of general Vinois.

There are notations by Marx in the notebook and a little information about individual acts of traitors against the cause of the proletariat, which could throw light on the activities of the French reformists of that time—Tolen and Louis Blanc—whose opportunistic and traitorous policies contributed not only to the defeat of the proletariat but also aided the butchers in the organization of the counter-revolutionary white terror.

We do not know why this big task of preparing these materials—a task on which Marx worked during the summer of 1871—was not finished nor why all this extraordinarily valuable material was not put to that use which Marx had intended—that of constituting it as a basis for a new and second indictment of Versailles. One thing is clear. This is that the collection and classification of this material greatly helped Marx and the whole International in effectively conducting the campaign for exposure of the Versailles terrorists and materially aided the defense of the Commune, which the General Council carried on successfully both in the workers' press and in the bourgeois papers of Europe.

In this connection must likewise be mentioned the actions of the General Council against individual representatives of the liberal bourgeoisie, whose activities then were particularly harmful both to the Communards themselves and to the workingclass movement

of the whole world. Here we shall limit ourselves to the matter of the circular issued in July, 1871, by the General Council against Washburn, the American ambassador at Paris. During the time of the civil war Washburn, "continually reiterated in public his ardent sympathy for the Commune" while in private he termed the Communards "rebels, deserving of their fate". Immediately after the downfall of the Commune, he wrote in the American press the most infamous "exposures" of the deeds of individual Communards and articles bemoaning the terrible fate of the Archbishop Darboy and other hostages of the Commune.

Nor was the exposing of another doubledealer—the English bourgeois republican Bradlow—of less significance. Expressing in the press and in public meetings a pretended sympathy for the principles of the Commune, Bradlow at the same time rabidly attacked the General Council and Marx, and declared that the burning down of public buildings could not be justified by considerations of strategy and that it was mass destruction of property.

It was Marx himself who also directed the struggle against these enemies of the working class and the Commune, and it was Marx who exposed these bourgeois hypocrites in the press. On Marx's insistence, and with his active participation, public meetings were organized during the summer of 1871 in various cities of England for the journalist Robert Reid, who was a sympathizer with the Commune. Reid had remained in Paris during the Commune as correspondent for certain London and New York newspapers and had the opportunity not only of learning of the activities of the Communards at first hand but also of recognizing their enemies, especially ambassador Washburn.

Organizing the Defense of the Communards in the Versailles Trials

Marx was faced with a tremendous task also in connection with the trial which was expected to be held in the beginning of July of the remaining members of the Commune who were being held in the prisons of Versailles.

Thiers endeavored to put on trial the whole International in the persons of the accused who were facing judgment. He did not hesitate to resort to the use of the crudest forged documents

to achieve his aim. The General Council paid the greatest attention to this trial which was to reveal the various "crimes" of the Commune and the International, and was to prove the necessity of taking the most drastic measures against the accused as "incendiaries" and "plunderers".

Thiers, who had many times postponed the trial, and who had personally selected the judges, naturally intended to utilize the court proceedings as a mighty weapon of bourgeois propaganda, displaying the exalted government of Versailles as the agency which had saved France and all the rest of the civilized world from the bandits of the Commune. In this way he believed that his justification for the savagery with which he had treated the Communards would be recognized. News of his savagery from July, 1871 on had gotten into the pages of the bourgeois press of Europe. Even the *Times*, which was particularly and bitterly hostile to the March 18th revolution, printed in July an article from its Paris correspondent reporting that the Communards were being "hunted down in Versailles" like wild beasts, that children were languishing in the prisons of Versailles, and that the prisoners were confined under inhuman conditions.

The necessity was clear to the General Council of thwarting this scheme of Thiers and thus not only saving the proletariat from the blow which was ready to strike it down but also lightening to the utmost the fate of those same prisoners of Versailles. The best means to this end would be the widespread publication in the European press of the truth about the impending trial, reports of which, as might be expected, would have gone out to the masses in distorted and abbreviated form. Just for this reason definite steps had already been taken by the General Council by the beginning of the trial of the Communards to influence public opinion in Europe and to create a situation which would be unfavorable for the circulation of the lies of the Versaillese.

A letter written for the most part by Friedrich Engels, but sent to the editor of the *Times* by Marx, is especially illuminating in this connection. We find in this letter, signed with the pseudonym "Justice", a disclosure not only of the real reasons for the repeated postponement of the trial and proof concerning the absolutely unheard of violation of the most elementary rights of the

accused but at the same time an appeal for the bringing of all possible pressure to bear on the Versailles government to compel it to end this mockery and torture of the prisoners.

"While the preparation for the trial goes on," wrote Marx and Engels, "the prisoners in Satory (one of the Versailles prisons—Ed.) are dying like flies. Ruthless death is swifter than the judge."

Marx himself was in charge of the negotiations which were carried on in the name of the General Council for the printing, outside of France, of full stenographic reports of the trial of the Communards. Already on July 28, Marx—as we see from letters which have been preserved—invited the Communard Lepellet to visit him.

"Come to me," he wrote. "You can negotiate with my friends from Brussels concerning the publication of the proceedings of the military court."

Negotiations already begun in June with one of the few honest defenders of the Communards, Leon Biget (who had been the lawyer for a worker named Ass), for publication in Brussels of the stenographic report of the trial, dragged on until the middle of August and were discontinued only after it was discovered that the meagre financial resources of the General Council made it utterly impossible to assume such big additional expenses. Moreover, right after the beginning of the trial in Versailles it had become quite clear that even the false reports of Thiers' journalists would not be able to create in Europe that public opinion required by the French government and that these reports could not convert the "holy baiting" of the Communards in Versailles into a persecution of the emigrants from the Commune who had fled to other countries of Europe.

It is necessary to state that this alone by no means exhausts the activities of Marx already carried on with regard to the trial of the Communards. In the correspondence which has been preserved we learn that during the entire trial and long before it Marx was in connection with this same Biget, that he sent to Biget in Paris and then in Versailles, material which was necessary for the organization of the defense.

The conspirative nature of these relations makes more difficult

their ascertainment. However, by July 11, Marx had already sent to Biget (we can infer this from a copy of a letter preserved among the papers of Marx) a lot of information about the International, its task and organization, confirming along with this the fact that Ass was taking no part at all in the activities of the General Council. Later, on August 10, after the trial had already started, Marx sent additional information through a person whom we do not know to Biget about the activities of the General Council, especially explaining in detail the political policy of the latter during the Franco-Prussian War. This particularly was important in helping the defense to refute the lying statements of the Prosecutor who had sought not only to establish in court the connection of the Commune with the Prussians but had also even represented the International as the secret agent of Bismarck.

With this we shall conclude our inquiry into the question of the moral and political support which was given after their defeat in the struggle against the greatest odds to the Communards of Paris by the leading center of the international workingclass movement of that time—the General Council in London—under the ideological and organizational leadership of Karl Marx. Only in the light of the facts thus given can we understand fully the significance of the many-varied activities of Marx connected with the organization of political support to the defeated Communards. It is these facts which have finally enabled us to comprehend those burning and stinging words uttered by Marx concerning the actions of individual emigrants of the Commune who had not understood the task which faced the international workingclass movement and whose actions disgraced the very cause which they had previously served.

"This was the thanks which I received for having lost nearly five months working on behalf of the emigrants and for having saved their honors by the ADDRESS ON THE CIVIL WAR".

We see now that by the *Civil War* alone Marx not only saved the honor of the Communards, who had been smeared with filth and hunted down by the "Versailles gang". Were not his actions in addition a benefit to the Commune and the Communards as well as a ceaseless struggle against their foul, venal and savage enemies!

The Serious Financial Situation of the General Council of the International and the Organization of Material Relief to the Emigrants of the Commune

Let us turn now to a review of another aspect of the activities of Marx,—activities in a field which is particularly interesting to us. This was the organization of material relief to the victims of the Versailles terror.

It is quite evident that the help given to the victims of the Versailles terror by the international organization of the proletariat could not be limited to moral support alone. From the bloodstained streets of Paris already after the bloody week of May there began to flow out across the boundaries into the countries nearest France a wave of new emigrants. This wave was made up overwhelmingly of representatives of the toiling masses—workers, handicraftsmen and the intelligentsia. Hungry and cold, these emigrants were doomed from the first day of their exile to the struggle for a crust of bread and a roof over their heads and a chance to work. They faced now in a foreign country new hardships, the story of which is told us so movingly in the pages of *London Streets*, written by the Communard Jules Valles.

The General Council, which had aligned itself in support of all the acts of the Commune, could not, of course, stand idly by while the fighters for the first revolution of the proletariat died of hunger and exposure on the benches of the parks and in the cheap lodging houses of London. Aid to the “plunderers of Paris” (the bourgeois designation for the defenders of the Commune), who had escaped across the border “some of them with their children and their wives with babes in their arms, and all oppressed with grief, having lost everything, had to be the immediate responsibility of the proletariat of the whole world,—the more so in that the defeated fugitive Communards could not expect help from the bourgeoisie”.

However, owing to a whole series of circumstances, the collection of funds necessary for the organization of systematic relief of the emigrants who had arrived abroad and especially in London had to be carried on under exceptionally great difficulties. As Marx said:

“The requests for help” from the defeated Communards

"reached the working class at a trying moment". "Switzerland and Belgium had already received their contingent of emigrants, whom they had to support and aid in getting to London. Money collected in Germany, Austria and Spain was forwarded to Switzerland. Then there was a big struggle going on in England for the nine-hour work-day. The center of this struggle was New Castle. This struggle made the utmost demands on the funds of the trade unions and contributions from individual workers".

As a result of this situation, taken by surprise at this sudden and overwhelming flood of emigrants, the General Council had not funds enough at its disposal to meet even a small part of all the requests and demands made upon it. It was only by the utmost effort in seeking out every available source of assistance both by personally calling on sympathizers and through letters to them—a work which was chiefly done by Marx—that the necessary funds were finally secured —literally in pennies.

The minutes of the meetings of the General Council show clearly the cramped financial situation of the International. As early as the fall of 1870 a special financial commission formed to check up the financial accounts of the General Council had reported to the latter that "the expenditures were, according to the accounts, too high in comparison with the income" and that it would therefore be necessary to be extremely careful in regard to finances. This commission proposed that the basic items of expense be sharply reduced and especially that the beggarly wages of the general secretary who had received only 15 shillings a week should be cut to 5 shillings (about \$1.25). This was at a time when an ordinary mechanic would not have been satisfied with 5 shillings a day! The majority of the members of the General Council did not, however, approve this suggestion. The problem of reducing the expenditures was temporarily put aside largely as the result of the receipt in the beginning of February, 1871, of 40 pounds (about \$200) for emigrant relief, turned over to the treasurer by a member of the International who did not want his name mentioned. This was a large sum for the budget of the General Council.

It was not long before the funds were again exhausted as a consequence of membership dues not being paid and of a lot of unforeseen expenditures. The problem of cutting down individual

items of expense was again set before the members of the General Council. On May 16 Heuls, who had been reelected secretary, himself raised the question of the necessity of reducing his wages to 10 shillings a week "not because he considered his present wages too high but because he felt that the General Council could not pay more than the amount he had named."

The necessity of supporting the first two of the emigrants of the Commune, who had requested help at the very beginning of June, placed the General Council in a difficult position. It was not long before the slender means of the International began rapidly to disappear, so that in the middle of the following month the General Council was on the verge of financial disaster. Young, the treasurer of the General Council, was obliged to report to the membership at the regular meeting on July 18 that *"the funds for the relief of the emigrants have been almost all used up while at the same time the demands on the funds continue to grow because many emigrants who previously have not appealed for aid are now turning to it for help and moreover those previously relieved come again for help."*

As a matter of fact, most of the funds collected by different means up to the fall of that year had been given in England, where the General Council and the individual sections and members of the International had succeeded in developing particularly strong activity and had managed to circulate among the toiling masses not only the ordinary lists signed by contributors to the fund, but also special forms of such appeals—the so-called "penny lists"—which made much easier the securing of contributions in small amounts from the masses. By September, when to judge from the minutes of one of the meetings "there was in the hands of the General Council six pounds" in spite of all the measures taken and the efforts made, it became clear that the General Council had not been able to overcome the crisis by its own strength. This placed before that body the necessity of turning to the American section of the International for aid.

During the course of the following summer months money was continually being sent to Switzerland where the internationalists had been placed in a most difficult position and where the leaders of the workingclass movement themselves—to judge from despond-

ent letters of the Swiss internationalist Becker—"often had not even two sous (2 cents U. S.—Ed.) to buy themselves tobacco." Only after a letter by Marx to the American comrades describing the desperate conditions, and only after a special appeal had been sent to New York on September 5 directed to the workers of America—written also in all probability by Marx—, did American contributions come to London. By the end of November these amounted to a sum large enough—over 100 pounds—to somewhat improve the financial situation of the General Council. None the less, by the end of December we already hear again at the sessions of the General Council the previous complaints that "there is no more money for the emigrants" and that therefore "something must be done, as the people are starving to death."

Thus we see that in the face of such great difficulties encountered by the General Council it succeeded by exerting its utmost efforts in meeting many urgent appeals for help and support which came to it from the starving Communards. During the whole of the year of 1871 and part also of 1872, the General Council as a body and all its individual members in particular were obliged to carry on a persistent struggle to overcome the financial difficulties and to search continually for new and different ways of replenishing the very limited emigrant funds of the International.

The Collection of Funds for the Emigrants of the Commune

But for the personal activities of individual members of the General Council who, according to Marx, "contributed not only their time but also gave out of their own pockets", the emigrants of the Commune would in all probability have "expired of hunger". This would have happened especially because as we have seen above, the hope of an immediate and quick response in contributions from the English working class and from individual sections of the International could not have been very great. As for help from the bourgeoisie there was no possibility at all of that. Consequently it was most important to try to get democratically inclined members of the English petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia to contribute. It was important to utilize personal connections and acquaintances with the object of replenishing the dwindling emigrant funds.

Correspondence which has been preserved indicates the very great activity of the members of the General Council and, of course, Marx himself, that was directed to this end. In trying to relieve the starving victims of the Versailles terror they utilized every possibility and means to the utmost. They even sought by efforts, which were destined in advance to failure, to get funds from English capitalists. They distributed lists for signature in the City (the part of London in which the Bank of England and other large financial institutions are located—Ed.). They also sent delegations to individual liberal members of the House of Commons. These activities among the higher strata of the English bourgeoisie were discontinued only after it had become evident that it was "impossible to squeeze out of the people of the City so much as a penny for the poor French fugitives."

It is unfortunate that hardly any of those many letters which Marx personally sent out to get contributions to the relief of the Communards are preserved.

"I have the honor," we read in a rough draft of a letter by Marx to a certain Knove, "to enclose in this letter a list for signatures for the French emigrants. Their number daily grows, while at the same time our resources are almost exhausted. The situation is really pitiful. It would be best if it were only possible to organize a special committee, the object of which would be to find work for these people, the most of whom are either skilled workers or handicraftsmen."

Appeals of this kind did not always remain unanswered. In addition to the democrats and republicans who were closest to Marx and the International, there was a large number of other persons, particularly of the middleclass, who responded to these appeals. Among them we find a minister from Brighton without whose pounds and shillings remitted to Marx the General Council doubtless would have been unable to undertake the relief of many cases of extreme need among the suffering emigrants. Moreover we know from letters which have been preserved that Marx and Engels took on themselves the rushing around and the providing for the sale of contributed articles for the benefit of the emigrants, getting donations of various things such as clothing, etc.,—in fact, everything that might ease the conditions of the Communards.

It is necessary to bring out the fact—particularly characteristic

of Marx as an organizer of relief to the victims of the Versailles terror—that HE NEITHER COULD NOR WANTED TO MAKE THE COLLECTION OF RELIEF FOR THE COMMUNARDS INTO AN ORDINARY BOURGEOIS PHILANTHROPIC AND HUMANITARIAN UNDERTAKING. He was ever on guard for the interests of the Communards and was always trying to eliminate whatever might lower or outrage their self-respect. He indignantly rejected, for instance, the proposal to circulate among Englishmen of means lists of the needy and starving Communards with an appeal in the characteristic hypocritical style and tone of those issued in the name of English charity.

"I have explained," Marx wrote in telling Engels about such a proposal, "that I can continue to distribute these contributions only so long as I have full freedom in the matter of the distribution and will not be bothered by demands for the presentation of statements of 'degrees of individual need'."

In another instance Marx reported most indignantly the humiliating means resorted to in memory of Yaroslav Dombrovsko, one of the generals of the Commune. Certain philanthropists, unasked, had found no better method than to appeal to the English public in general for help to the widow of the slain general "who is in London with two children and a third child expected in fifteen days" and is "prepared if there is not other recourse to go to the workhouse." Marx noted with satisfaction the sharp reproval which these uninvited and tactless intercessors received from Teofel, the brother of the dead general.

Organization of the Flight of the Fugitives from France

The funds collected with such difficulty did not only go to the relief of emigrants who had come to London or other parts of England, the number of whom had reached several hundreds by the end of the year. During the whole of 1871 the General Council had been secretly sending money to France, especially to Paris, where for a long time the authorities kept uncovering individual activists of the Commune who had hidden themselves for months deep underground or in garrets, waiting for a chance to flee across the border. Rigid control of all routes to the border made the flight from France during the summer and fall of 1871 most difficult

and dangerous. This compelled many of the Communards who had escaped the perils of the week of May to wait long for an easing up of the surveillance in the depots, the outposts, and the railways. Without money and passports it was virtually impossible to get out of France at that time. It is no wonder then that many Communards were not able to cross the border until the end of 1871 or even in 1872. Thus, for example, the famous painter Plotell—a Communard and a very intimate co-worker of Raoul Rigaud was obliged to conceal himself for nine whole months in Paris and was then able to cross the border only with forged documents. Charles Gerardin, another member of the Commune, arrived in London not until January, 1872.

Of course the minutes of the meetings of the General Council say almost nothing at all about this secret sending of funds and passports to Paris. Naturally affairs of this kind were not submitted for general discussion, but were decided in a special subcommittee or by the leaders of the General Council themselves. Only once—in October, 1871—do we come across a reference in the minutes to this aspect of the activities of the General Council. We read of the sending of 3 pounds sterling to Paris "for a fugitive condemned to death".

The conspirative character of all the relations of the General Council with Paris makes it difficult for us to ascertain the facts. All that is available are letters which happen to have been preserved by individuals. From these we learn that Marx was the center of all the negotiations, that it was precisely he who suggested all that was done in order to ensure the necessary documents for those who had to leave France and it was he also who organized the forwarding of these documents to the Communards in Paris who were hiding from the police. The most reliable documents affording a comparatively safe passage over the French border were without question the actual passport of a foreigner, visaed for the journey from France to some other country. A Communard supplied with a passport of this sort as a person "of foreign birth" was subjected on departure only to the most superficial questioning and inspection, and usually had no difficulty in getting through the French boundary stations, flooded though these were

with hundreds of spies and police after the suppression of the Commune.

"Any fairly intelligent person can slip through the French border at Calais. The police there are all stupid," an acquaintance of Marx's reported to him from Paris. "One must not, however, do as a little fellow did in Calais, who roundly cursed in 'Belleville style' when they refused to believe his English papers. (Belleville is a workingclass section of Paris.—Ed). So it is necessary if you have an English passport to memorize a dozen words in English, as this incident shows."

The furnishing of such foreign passports to the Communards hidden in Paris was also a task of the General Council. The latter not only had to hunt up foreigners outside of France who were willing to give the Communards their passports, but it also had to organize the forwarding of these documents through reliable persons to Paris in order to wrench out of the hands of Thiers the revolutionists there in hiding.

From the beginning of June, Marx was the center of all this activity of the General Council, utilizing all his connections and acquaintances to get the passports. "One of my woman friends," he wrote to Professor Beesley on June 12, "is going to Paris in three or four days. I will give her 4 passports which we have, and these she will hand over to certain members of the Commune who are still hidden in Paris." A number of letters with the addresses written by Marx show that the forwarding of passports to Paris was not discontinued until the end of 1871 and that many Communards were enabled to cross the borders with the help of these documents. "I have sent everything necessary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Go to him, please." This was written to Marx by one of his friends in the beginning of July. The letter pointed out the necessity of having the English passport visaed in London by the French consulate, adding a few words to that effect that "I have tried to sign the passport in such a way that my signature can be easily imitated by other holders of the passport."

We know likewise from other sources that Marx also took part in other work of a type known to all revolutionists—namely, in the alteration and forgery of foreign passports in order to fit them for the particular need—the writing in of new names, new age,

dates, and new descriptions. As if quite an ordinary matter, Ernest Dronk, an old friend of Marx, in sending his passport to Marx in London, remarked on the necessity to "enlighten" the latter a little on the fact that "by chemical means everything written on a passport can be obliterated and it can then be filled up with other matter."

Necessarily the work of sending the documents on to Paris by the different possible routes and especially delivering them to the Communards living there under illegal conditions had to be achieved by special conspirative measures. The passports were forwarded to Paris through various reliable persons and there secretly delivered in accordance with the instructions. Only scraps of material give us the opportunity to judge this phase of the illegal work of the General Council and of Marx. A curious letter by the Communard Razvadovski—by chance preserved among the papers of Marx—show us how these transfers were effected. On July 7, 1871, Razvadovski wrote to Marx as follows:

"Doctor!

"A Parisian woman lives at 14 Trouffeu street in Batignolles. The password is 'Have you flowers of the shade T?' The answer is 'Yes'.

"The London woman is going away not later than Monday. I have been provoked by her egotism and have some doubt about her courage. None the less, she is taking everything you want and will act as agreed. I will be responsible for it.

"This Parisian woman will change her apartment on the 8th or 15th of this month. It is necessary to wait for her new address.

"Yours sincerely,

"With regard,

"RAZVADOVSKI."

After a few days Herman Young, treasurer of the General Council, sent to Marx—to whom, evidently, all the documents thus prepared were given—a trustworthy person with the request to "Hand over to the bearer the passport about which I spoke to you yesterday", refraining at the same time from giving any personal or family names in the note.

Because of this unavoidable secrecy in the conspirative work there is no possibility of ascertaining either the number of passports forwarded to Paris nor the names of those Communards who

managed to get out of France only with the help of the General Council and Marx, only passing references in personal letters tell us that through the efforts of Marx a passport in the name of some German citizen was prepared and sent on to Paris, which helped in making it possible for the Communard Charles Keller, an Alsatian by birth, to cross the Swiss border. It was Keller who on the eve of the revolution of March 18 began to translate the first volume of Marx's *Capital* into French. We may likewise take it for granted that it was Marx who helped to organize the passage to London of a number of Polish communists, especially of the General Wroblewski.

Finding of Work for Them

As we have seen, a part of the funds at the disposal of the General Council went to the organization of the flight of individual Communards from Paris. The largest part of the funds was, however, directly spent in London, being handed over to emigrants especially in need of relief. How was the distribution of these funds collected from various sources organized?

At first the distribution of this money among the Communards was carried on directly by the treasurer of the General Council, Young, who on June 6 had already been given full power to "give relief to those of the emigrants who may be in need of it." For this purpose there was placed at his disposal the sum of 25 pounds.

In the middle of July it had become clear to the General Council that it would be necessary to set about the creation of a regularly functioning relief organization and that even at the very beginning the assigned sum would not long suffice to meet all the requests and support directed to the General Council. At the meeting of the General Council held June 13 there were only a few emigrants in London. In a while the number increased greatly and the demands for relief became more frequent. The impossibility of holding up the meetings of the General Council for the consideration of all the details connected with the organization of relief made it necessary to establish a new system for the distribution. On the motion of Engels the General Council decided to turn over the whole matter of relief to a sub-committee of six members. It was in general the task of this sub-committee to prepare material for the meetings of the General Council which regularly

took place on Saturday evenings. After a short discussion it was decided that along with this there should be instituted a special "Emigrants' Fund" to which all contributions should be assigned. Thus after this decision there was placed on the shoulders of Marx, who was the head of this sub-committee and who had led all its work, the new and quite trying task of distributing among the needy Communards the funds which had been collected, the basis of the distribution order in which the aid was to be received to be fixed according to the relative need, etc.

That this "Committee for Emigrant Relief" met regularly we can conclude from the bill presented by the owners of the house in which the meetings of the General Council took place and by personal letters addressed to Marx. Marx personally took part in all the work of the committee and always attended at the apportioning of emigrant aid—as we know from many sources. It is not surprising that after a few months of such straining and nervous work the health of Marx, which had been very bad in the spring of 1871, was seriously undermined.

It was only at the very end of August, after the establishment of a branch "Society of French Emigrants in London", that Marx was relieved of the task of handling the direct relationship with the masses of the emigrants. From this time on the treasurer of the General Council—Young—handed over every week directly to the representatives of the above-mentioned society the largest portion of the collected sums, which were then distributed through this society to the needy emigrants.

Much of the work connected with the securing of jobs for the Communards who were without any means of subsistence was also laid on Marx. We have already referred above to the efforts of Marx to organize a special English committee to deal with this phase of the relief, ignorance of the language and unfamiliarity with working conditions in the foreign country making it extraordinarily hard for most of the emigrants themselves to find jobs. Hardly any letters by Marx containing requests for work for Communards have been preserved. This side of his activities must be judged chiefly from the many letters of various persons containing instructions for securing work for the Communards and in

letters to Marx by those same Communards who found work through his assistance.

We will not here attempt a detailed analysis of this correspondence. Several examples selected at random will suffice to show what the whole mass of emigrants thought about this work of Marx. For instance there is the case of Razvadovski. The latter was in the most extreme poverty in London, even usually—to quote his own words—"often—indeed very often, I was starving." One of the letters by Engels to Marx enables us to judge with what readiness both friends came to his assistance. Engels had first tried to find Razvadovski a position as a school teacher. "I aided him to leave. There he learned English out of necessity," is his report to Marx. Engels added that he had out of his own pocket not only paid the commissions to the employment agent, the debts and travelling expenses of Razvadovski, but that he had in addition bought clothing (a suit, hat, and shoes—as appears from a store bill that has been preserved) for him for the trip. About the same time work had been found for Razvadovski in the home of Marx. "We had just left the house this morning in order to arrange matters for Razvadovski", so writes Engels further, "when your wife brought me a letter from Theobald in which R (Razvadovski—Ed.) is afforded a more profitable solution of his difficulties through Davidov."

Theophile Dombrowski, also through Marx's intervention, got the opportunity to place a series of his articles on the events in Paris in a New York newspaper. "I am eternally obliged to you for this. —I thank you for your kindness," is what this haughty Polish rebel wrote in this connection to Marx. It was the same Pole who, as we noted above, delivered the stinging rebuff to the impudent English philanthropists.

.... "Tomorrow go to Fusse," Marx himself wrote to the Communard Lepellettier. "Fusse is a Frenchman, an old emigrant, now a trader. I spoke to him yesterday about you. I told him that I would be greatly obliged to him for rendering you this service. He replied that he might be able to help you in the sale of some of your pictures." At the same time Marx directed another painter, the Communard Hubert, also to this same Fusse. "He took me to many of his acquaintances who themselves

will buy or sell my pictures to others,," Hubert joyfully wrote to Marx, adding that "In these years of starvation you rendered me invaluable services."

In the archives of the Marx-Engels Institute dozens of letters are preserved in which Communards thank Marx for having helped them or given them relief and support in difficult times or in which there are merely requests for advice. Certain of these letters particularly reveal well the deep feeling, affection, and faith which the emigrants had in the old leader of the International. For example, take that written to Marx by the Communard Le Mousseau that he was not yet in such circumstances that he could give expression to his gratitude *"to the good Mr. Marx, his lovely daughters, and the care which you yourself so long bestowed on me. . . . Your kindness,"* wrote Le Mousseau, *"moved me to tears. . . . Your devotion to the cause of the revolution and the friendship with which you have honored me makes it possible for me to turn directly to you in case of extreme need. . . . I am proud of your kind attention. It gives me courage and makes me forget the misfortunes of the exiled."*

People who were strangers turned to Marx for help and advice without embarrassment, knowing beforehand they would find in him sympathy and attention for their misfortunes. "In London I fell into such poverty that it would have been necessary to sell all my clothing,"—we read in a letter from a petty Parisian trader who was made bankrupt at the time of the siege and who was in London without any means. "I find Mr. Marx in such a situation as it is quite impossible to describe," writes the Communard Cumpagnchy, who had applied to Marx for help.

Together with these cries of despair Marx was also obliged to listen to petty-bourgeois complaints and demands from individual Communards. For instance he had to consider where to put the son of the Communard Avreal for study or where to find a lawyer for another Communard's divorce case. It is unnecessary to say that the doors of Marx's apartment in London were open to all fugitive Communards. Within the circle of his family they could always count on finding not merely kind words. In the summer and autumn of 1871 there was not a day when at the table of the Marx family there were not several hungry emigrants.

Marx did not have to make any special efforts to draw his wife and daughters into the relief work for these emigrants. Already during the hard days which followed the "frenzied" year of 1848, Marx's wife had done everything in her power to lighten somewhat the hardships of exile for a number of the fighters in the 1848 revolution. Now she actively helped Marx not only in the collection of donations and in the finding of work for the Communards, but also did everything to get the necessary passports for the Communards and participated in their secret forwarding.

Likewise Laura, later the wife of LaFargue who was closely connected with the Communards, and Jenny, who was soon to become the wife of the Communard Longuet (the two oldest daughters of Marx) did not limit themselves to the organizing of material help for the emigrants. Side by side with their father, they wrote for the current press against Favre and Thiers and in defense of the course of the Communards. This also applies to the 17-year old, youngest daughter of Marx—Tussy—who fell in love with the Communard Lissagaray. By her translation into English of his book on the Commune she showed how close to her heart were the interests of the Communards.

Conclusions

Thus we see that after the downfall of the Commune Marx devoted himself completely to the cause of the organization of relief for the victims of the Versailles terror. Continuing his unceasing struggle against Versailles which he had started long before the publication of *Civil War in France*, Marx never for one moment forgot the necessity of rendering aid to the fighters of the first proletarian revolution who had lost their strength and were therefore temporarily out of the struggle.

It was neither love for his neighbor, nor classless philanthropy, nor petty-bourgeois sentimentality which forced him to extend a helping hand to the Communards defeated in the unequal struggle and to take care of their starving children and wives. In this respect also Marx remained first of all a fighter and a revolutionary. In the starving and shivering emigrants of the Commune he saw not merely "The lowly and despised," to aid whom it was the duty of every honest person. He knew that "the princi-

ples of the Commune are eternal and will assert themselves again and again until the working class achieves its emancipation."

This idea of the future struggle forced him to give himself and all his strength unreservedly to the task of rendering help to the victims of the Versailles terror. In the soldiers of the first unsuccessful revolution of the proletariat, he could not but see the cadres of that great army of the toilers who, as it seemed to him in 1871, would soon start the last and decisive battle with the bourgeoisie.

This was the ground for his great interest in the emigration of the Communards as a whole and in each individual Communard in particular. Thus we find in one of his notebooks a carefully copied list of Communards which had been sent by the French government to foreign governments along with an insolent circular by Favre. Marx's aim is clearly seen by the notes he made opposite the names of these Communards. It was to record the remaining soldiers of the revolutionary army and to help them take their place again in the ranks of the world proletariat fighting against capitalism.

We cannot blame Marx and the General Council because many Communards were unable to find their places in the ranks of the proletariat and did not want to devote themselves to the fight under the banners of the International created by Marx. The petty-bourgeois character which marked the majority of the emigrants of the Commune made inevitable the differences in program, tactics, and organizational principles and led many of them into the camp of the Bakunists who were fighting against Marx. This petty-bourgeois composition had a decisive influence in the choosing of those methods and means of struggle which they resorted to in the bitterly savage factional controversies against Marx and the General Council.

Torn away from the revolutionary masses of Paris who alone gave the revolution of the 18th of March its proletarian character, and living as political emigrants in a foreign country, the late defenders and heroes of the Paris Commune became adherents of either the Prudhonist minority or the Blanquist majority. They could not completely comprehend the tasks facing the world proletarian movement and they inevitably became "frenzied bourgeois"

who,—in the words of Lenin—easily become extreme revolutionists but can not show perseverance, organizing ability, discipline, and endurance.

Marx did all he could to prevent the better part of the emigrants from succumbing to these weaknesses. *"My sickness continually keeps me home,"* he wrote to the Communard Leppelletier, *"I could not do all I wanted to support the healthy element in the 'Qui Vive!' (a newspaper published by the emigrants from the Commune in London.) Nevertheless I have spoken with many of my French friends, but I do not know what they have done in the matter. . . . I am sending you thirty membership cards which you can use for new candidates,"* he wrote further, relying on Leppelletier conducting the agitation among the emigrants and drawing many of them into the international organization of the proletariat.

Despite all attacks and baseless, malicious accusations, Marx and the other members of the General Council not only continued to the utmost to search out every possible means for relieving the starving emigrants of the Commune but at the same time strained all their forces to draw the Communards into the ranks of the world proletariat which was leading the organized struggle against capitalism.

They were able, under the extremely difficult conditions of 1871, and with very small material resources, to create almost out of nothing this striking organization of relief to the victims of the Versailles terror, an organization which we must recognize as the forerunner of the International Labor Defense of our times.

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